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Press Release

March 11, 2004

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ATTORNEY GENERAL INTRODUCES INTERNET SAFETY PROGRAM TO WAYNE COUNTY STUDENTS

Attorney General Darrell McGraw visited the ninth grade class of Wayne County High School today to introduce the internet safety program his office developed for West Virginia students. The Attorney General's Office developed the 30-minute program for West Virginia schools, in coordination with the National White Collar Crime Center and the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children.

The West Virginia program focuses on teaching school children to protect themselves from identity theft and sexual assault and kidnapping by strangers who contact them through chat rooms and instant messaging. While chat rooms are not allowed to be used on school computers, this program teaches children about safety issues on their home computers where stalkers are most likely to reach them.

The program includes a short video, "Amy's Choice," produced by the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children. The video is about a 15-year old girl who was abducted by a man she met online. In her own words, she tells how they met in a private chat room, where she gave him personal information, and how he abducted her across state lines. Amy warns, "You don't know what they're capable of."

The Power Point Presentation warns students about online teenage victims:

1 in 5 received a sexual solicitation or approach.

1 in 3 received an aggressive sexual solicitation where someone asked to meet them somewhere, someone called them on the phone, or someone sent them regular mail, money, or gifts.

1 in 4 had unwanted exposure to pictures of naked people or people having sex.

1 in 17 was threatened or harassed.

In order to avoid being a victim, the Attorney General recommends the following Rules of Safety for teens online:

Don't give personal information to strangers you meet on the Internet. Stalkers can use your phone number, address, city or the name of your school to find you.

Don't agree to meet face-to-face with an Internet stranger.

Avoid talking to online friends about running away from home.

Be aware that not everyone in a chat room is who they say they are. Even someone who says they are a teenager can actually be an adult who means to harm you.

The Attorney General asks parents to call their local schools and request that the Internet safety program be presented for their children

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